

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method for serving executable application programs over a computer network from an application server system to a target computer having an operating system executing in a first session, the method comprising:

the target computer signaling the application server system with a request for an application program;

the application server system responding to the request by transferring an application descriptor to the target computer;

the application descriptor being read by a helper application executing on the target computer, the helper application determining from the application descriptor a configuration required by the target computer to execute the requested application program; and

the helper application controlling the target computer to execute the application program, ~~which resides~~ the application program residing on the application server system, the helper application using said configuration, whereby portions of the application program are retrieved and executed without an installation of the application program on the target computer and wherein the operating system continues to execute in the first session without a reboot and restart of the operating system of the target computer.

2. (Previously presented) A method as described in Claim 1, further comprising the target computer signaling the application server system with the request for the application program by user selection of a link, which is displayed by a browser and associated with the application program.

3. (Previously presented) A method as described in Claim 2, further comprising the link containing an application identifier that identifies the requested application program to the application server system.

4. (Previously presented) A method as described in Claim 2, further comprising the link pointing the browser to the application server system.

5. (Previously presented) A method as described in Claim 2, wherein activating the link triggers the downloading of the application descriptor from the application server system to the target computer.

6. (Previously presented) A method as described in Claim 1, further comprising the application server system encrypting the application descriptor prior to transmission to the target computer.

7. (Original) A method as described in Claim 1, further comprising invoking the helper application in response to the receipt of the application descriptor on the target computer.

8. (Original) A method as described in Claim 1, further comprising maintaining the helper application on a graphical user interface of the target computer.

9. (Original) A method as described in Claim 1, further comprising maintaining the helper application on a graphical user interface of the target computer to display advertisements.

10. (Previously presented) A method as described in Claim 1, further comprising issuing a command to a browser to display a follow-up page in response to termination of the application program on the target computer.

11. (Previously presented) A method as described in Claim 1, further comprising including, in the application descriptor, minimum system requirements information, which is used by the target computer to ensure that adequate system resources are available to run the application program.

12. (Original) A method as described in Claim 11, wherein the application descriptor contains transaction mode information.

13. (Previously presented) A method as described in Claim 11, wherein the application descriptor contains application server information indicating a host computer to which the target computer is to attach to receive the application program.

14. (Original) A method as described in Claim 11, wherein the application descriptor contains advertisement information indicating a host computer to which the target computer is to attach to receive advertisements.

15. (Previously presented) A method as described in Claim 1, further comprising tracking by the server system a status of the operation of the application program on the target computer.

16. (Previously presented) A method as described in Claim 1, further comprising a failure server of the application server system receiving error log information from the helper application in response to improper operation of the application program on the target computer.

17. (Previously presented) A method as described in Claim 1, further comprising the application descriptor containing application server information indicating a host computer of application server system to which the target computer is to attach to receive the application program, the host computer being selected to load-balance across the application server system.

18. (Previously presented) A method as described in Claim 1, further comprising the target computer mounting the server system to access the application program.

19. (Original) A method as described in Claim 1, further comprising the target computer accessing the server system via port 80.

20. (Currently amended) An application serving system operating across a computer network, the system comprising:

a target computer that requests an application program;

an application server system that responds to the request by transferring an application descriptor to the target computer; and

a helper process executing on the target computer that reads the application descriptor to determine a configuration required by the target computer to execute the application program, the helper process controlling the target computer to execute the application program using said configuration without installing the application program

on the target computer, wherein at least a portion of the application program resides on the application server system.

21. (Previously presented) A system as described in Claim 20, wherein the target computer is activated to signal the server system with the request for the application program by user selection of a link, which is displayed by a browser and associated with the application program.

22. (Previously presented) A system as described in Claim 21, wherein the link contains an application identifier that identifies the requested application program to the application server system.

23. (Previously presented) A system as described in Claim 21, wherein the link points the browser to the application server system.

24. (Previously presented) A system as described in Claim 21, wherein activating the link triggers the downloading of the application descriptor from the application server system to the target computer.

25. (Previously presented) A system as described in Claim 20, wherein the application server system encrypts the application descriptor prior to transmission to the target computer.

26. (Original) A system as described in Claim 20, wherein the helper process is invoked in response to the receipt of the application descriptor on the target computer.

27. (Original) A system as described in Claim 20, wherein the helper process is maintained on a graphical user interface of the target computer.

28. (Original) A system as described in Claim 20, wherein the helper application is maintained on a graphical user interface of the target computer to display advertisements.

29. (Previously presented) A system as described in Claim 20, wherein a command is issued to a browser to display a follow-up page in response to termination of the application program on the target computer.

30. (Previously presented) A system as described in Claim 20, wherein the application descriptor contains minimum system requirements information, which is used by the target computer to ensure that adequate system resources are available to execute the application program.

31. (Original) A system as described in Claim 20, wherein the application descriptor contains transaction mode information.

32. (Previously presented) A system as described in Claim 20, wherein the application descriptor contains application server information indicating a host computer to which the target computer is to attach to receive the application program.

33. (Original) A system as described in Claim 20, wherein the application descriptor contains advertisement information indicating a host computer to which the target computer is to attach to receive advertisements.

34. (Previously presented) A system as described in Claim 20, wherein the server system tracks a status of the operation of the application program on the target computer.

35. (Previously presented) A system as described in Claim 20, further comprising a failure server of the application server system that receives error log information from the helper application in response to improper operation of the application program on the target computer.

36. (Previously presented) A system as described in Claim 20, wherein the application descriptor contains application server information indicating a host computer of application server system to which the target computer is to attach to receive the application program, the host computer being selected to load balance across the application server system.

37. (Previously presented) A system as described in Claim 20, further comprising the target computer mounting the application server system to access the application program.

38. (Previously presented) A system as described in Claim 20, further comprising the target computer accessing the application server system via port 80.

39–42. (Canceled)

43. (Currently amended) A method for providing a software application program from an application server system to a target computer over a network, the method comprising:

sending an application request signal, indicative of the software application program, from the target computer to the application server system, the target computer having an operating system executing in a first session;

receiving an application descriptor from the application server system, the application descriptor corresponding to the software application program;

responsive to information in the application descriptor, executing a helper application on the target computer, the helper application using the information in the application descriptor and identifying a configuration of application program elements required by the target computer to execute the software application program without installing the application program on the target computer;

receiving said application program elements from the application server system over the network; and

executing the software application program on the target computer using the received executable application program elements wherein the operating system is continuing to execute in the first session and wherein a reboot and a restart of the target computer is not required to execute the application program.

44. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 43, further comprising selecting a link associated with the software application program.

45. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 43, further comprising installing or updating the helper application on the target computer.

46. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 43, further comprising decrypting the application descriptor if the application descriptor is received in encrypted form.

47. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 43, further comprising checking a firewall proxy to allow streaming of the application program elements from the application server system to the target computer.

48. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 43, wherein receiving the application program elements comprises receiving streaming data including the application program elements.